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USML-1 CEREMONY
MARSHALL SPACE CENTER
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1992

There are great rewards for those who are bold enough to dare great things. Today we are here to celebrate the nearly flawless completion of the first U.S. Microgravity Lab mission and the people who made it one of NASA's most successful and important missions.

Columbia's flight was one for the record book. The longest shuttle mission ever \ provided 50% more on orbit time to the science payload than any previous Spacelab mission. The Crystal Growth Furnace ran for longer than all previous NASA-sponsored crystal growth experiments. The crystals were some of the largest and best-formed of any flight. Almost 40% of the protein crystals were a success, compared with 25% in the past.

When I took this job, the President said that unfortunately, all we see are shuttle launches on TV, whereas what we really need to make the American people see and understand is the important science that NASA does, and how it affects their lives. Well, this mission accomplished that. The USML team did a great job explaining to the American people all about protein crystals, and drop physics, and all the other wonderful science that was ~~completed.~~ undertaken.

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The extensive media coverage proves that people are just as interested in the science as they are in dramatic satellite rescues, because scientific advancement drives our economy forward and leads to better health and better lives. Everyone who helped advance the public's understanding of this mission should be very proud of what you did.

Today we recognize the excellence of the whole USML Team -- all of whom did outstanding work and represent the pride of NASA. Harry Craft, the overall manager of the Spacelabs. Charles Sprinkle, the manager of the USML mission. Dr. Donald Frazier, the Chief Scientist who coordinated all the scientific investigators. Bob Little, the Payload Operations Director that made the real-time decisions in the control center.

Of course it takes a team of thousands to accomplish anything this grand. It takes engineering support, an operations team, principal investigators, and payload specialists. Our contractors are also full partners, such as Teledyne Brown Engineering, that integrated this laboratory.

Trying to reach beyond our grasp is how we make progress at NASA. The experiments of the U.S. Microgravity Lab show all the more why we need Space Station Freedom. The opportunities for advancement in physics, chemistry, medicine, and biotechnology are truly out of this world.

The knowledge we gain from living and working in microgravity on the space station will assist us in going back to the moon -- this time to stay -- and then on to Mars.

The secrets of the solar system -- and what they can tell us about the future of Earth -- are waiting to be discovered.

When President Bush was here at Marshall two years ago, he said: "Some say the space program ought to wait, that we should only go forward once the social problems today are completely solved. But history proves that that attitude is self-defeating. Had Columbus waited until all the problems of his time were solved, the timbers of the Santa Maria would be rotting on the Spanish coast to this very day."

The President concluded, "History tells us what happens to nations that forget how to dream. The American people want us in space. So let us continue the dream for our students, for ourselves, and for all humankind."

Congratulations to all, and thank you all very much.

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